1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
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which does not necessarily compromise the nobility of his soul. 783

Nevertheless these are sins which separate man from God. 828 If they provoke no sense of personal guilt, a man feels a heaviness, a depression of his spirit, when he thinks of his need to be near God, and of this inherited condition of sinfulness. In the previous chapter I mentioned how the Sarakatsani think of the years of youth as the time of moral excellence. Later come responsibilities and the need for cunning, deceit, and lies. There is grudging admiration for the expertise of the shrewd leader but regret that the means to success must be these. 'If only we had trust in one another', is the most common Sarakatsan expression of utopian values. In the face of the many external threats to their way of life they are profoundly conscious of their own disunion. They sense, also, the distance between the heroic quality of their ideals and the often petty quarrels, or hypocritical posturings, of everyday living. But, they say, there is nothing the individual can do to alter the corrupt forms and conditions of life in this world. In this situation sin, for which they are not responsible, separates the Sarakatsani from God. It requires the grace of God, conferred through the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, to make communion possible. Inevitably if a child dies unbaptized, innocent of the world but still implicated in the appalling consequences of original sin, its soul is lost. The baptized Sarakatsanos is free of the original guilt, yet participation in the world of sin again separates him from God and he requires, therefore, the periodical renewal of his state of grace which the Eucharist effects. The related elements in Sarakatsan religious life, then, are simply these: the nobility of the Sarakatsani, ancestral sin in the forms of sensuality and envy for which they are not individually responsible, the consequences of this condition of sin which separates them from God, the sacraments which reunite them to Him.

783 828 829 1171 [851]

Ideas about fate are related to these notions of sin. The Sarakatsani, in common with most Greek villagers, believe that on the third night after the birth of a child, the three Fates (Μοῖρες), in the form of three old women, visit the infant's cradle and write the child's fate. What they decree is unalterable. In a number of folk stories the mother overhears the words of the Fates and attempts to prevent some stroke of

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ill fortune, generally an early death in predicted circumstances. Her precautions, however, are inevitably unsuccessful.

If the Sarakatsani are pressed to give the provenance and authority of these Fates, they reply that ultimately all things are written by God. But it would be incorrect to suggest that the Greek villager or shepherd faces all the events of his life in terms of a simple determinism. They do not think that the Fates arrange every detail of an individual's life. Length of life and amounts of good and ill fortune provide an external framework within which man must still struggle to avoid dishonour. These external circumstances tell nothing of the individual's moral worth; nor within the general limits set by his fate is a man prevented from seeking the help and protection of God. In practice, of course, the individual does not know what the Fates have decided for him. But the knowledge that something has, indeed, been decided encourages him to face dangers with manliness and honour, since no bullet or knife can reach its mark before the appointed hour of death.

When a man suffers misfortune, although different people may variously refer it to God's punishment or the evil eye, all will agree that it was 'written from God' (γραμμένο ἀπὸ τὸν Θεό). Similarly, in commenting on differences of fortune they will say, 'God wills it thus, some are higher, some are lower'. In Sarakatsan thought, existence in a world of external necessity is inevitably involved with ancestral sin. The multiplicity of contrary wills, the division of the sexes, the limitations of time, space, and physical resources lead to acts which are sinful. These conditions imply that the material circumstances of men must be different. Instead of being united in their respect for God, men are divided by their different personal circumstances and their self-interested struggle to improve them. Thus although Sarakatsani would not systematize their thoughts in this way, there is implied a link between ancestral sin and fate. The notion that particular events in life, and the circumstances of an individual's social position are 'written from God' indicates not so much God's detailed pre-arrangement of each individual's life, as His prevision of what will happen to each of His created beings caught up in the contingencies of sin and fate and yet still exercising in the struggle a measure of free will.

/271 cont./

likewise, burning charcoal is placed upon the threshold and, from time to time, grains of incense are tossed upon it. All who enter are subjected to purifying fumigation. The same desire to keep away "evils," causes /the Sarakatsani/ to throw into the hearth an old shoe or a piece of coarsely woven wool which give off malodorous fumes.

Forty days after the birth, mother and child, soiled by the childbirth, must submit to purification. The hut is thoroughly cleaned, the mother and child carefully bathed. Then both betake themselves to the nearest Church where the priest, in accordance with the Orthodox rite, blesses them (in commemoration of the presentation of the Lord to the temple, according to old Hebraic customs which recall the universal taboos of birth). A boy accompanies them so that other boys will be born into the family.

The health of boys is likewise ensured by another method. On Easter Sunday at dawn each head of a family kills the paschal lamb which will then be roasted on the spit. The moment the blood runs, he wets his fingers with it and draws a cross on the forehead of boys "so that they do not become anemic." (63)

63. According to the explanation of Madame Hadjimichali: Ibid., A.I. ρμ3'.

The amulets, too, afford a protection against evils, and that in a lasting fashion. We have given some particulars concerning their composition, which varies/272/ greatly and constitues a veritable breviary of all the Sarakatsani magic beliefs. On an amulet necklace worn by a child (see figure 101) we found: a miniature of the Gospel which is sold at all the village fairs; a blue ball on which was fastened a small cross; a cross of mastic; a small bag filled with /Figure 101 appears here/ salt and incense; a medal struck with the image of the Virgin; a coin; a bag containing a wing bone of a bat; a ball of amber; a cowrie /porcelain/ (shell of Venus); finally, the weight from a fairy's spindle, carved in gabbro.